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ABSTRACT

This document focuses on some of the key issues that surround any substantive discussion of Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) children and gifted education. The goals, rationale, and criticisms of gifted education are discussed, and answers to how high-ability LEP students might better be served in these programs are sought. The discussion examines expanding views of ability and talent and the issue of identification of high-potential LEP students and looks at specific levers for change that school staff need to consider and enact before gifted education can truly serve English language learners. An illustration is provided of how one school system worked to include and nurture its English language learners in its gifted programs. Rosa Perez describes how San Diego City Schools dramatically increased the numbers of LEP Students in gifted programs through a reform of its entire gifted program. Robert J. Sternberg argues that schooling practices must change to reflect the new value that should be placed on high ability students and insists that American educators move beyond the highly politicized context of both gifted and bilingual education to achieve a new and productive means to identify and develop talent in LEP learners. The document concludes with a brief action plan for school personnel in both bilingual and gifted education. (Author/VWL)

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Talent and Diversity: The Emerging World of Limited English Proficient Students in Gifted Education

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Introduction

What can be done to dramatically, but authentically, increase the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in gifted education programs? Are there specific, concrete steps that practitioners can take to encourage greater inclusion of LEP students in gifted programs while maintaining high programmatic standards? How can school staff in both gifted education and bilingual education work collaboratively to foster improved talent development for students from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds?

To extend the dialogue about these questions and to contribute to the knowledge base about LEP students and gifted education, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) sponsored a 2-day invitational national conference in Washington, DC in January 1997 for researchers and practitioners from both gifted and bilingual education. This conference was the starting point of the OERI/OBEMLA Initiative on LEP Students With Outstanding Talents.

The meeting encouraged a lively and productive exchange between individuals who might not ordinarily enjoy such dialogue—and nudged thoughtful, small-group discussion of thorny, controversial concepts. The conference concluded with broad recommendations for improved identification of LEP students for gifted programs and suggestions for nurturing LEP students so they can attain maximum development of their talents once they enter gifted programs. However, the conference—while useful to participants—should only be considered a promising first step toward reaching a solution to a complicated problem.

The practitioners and researchers who attended the conference from both fields learned each other's educational vocabulary, such as the meaning of terms special to bilingual and gifted education, worked to break down barriers between the two programs, and listened attentively to each other's experiences developing inclusive talent development programs for English language learners. Yet although conference participants appeared to agree that their dialogue was illuminating and helpful, they concurred that one meeting alone is clearly not sufficient to solve such a complex problem.

In this publication, we focus on some of the key issues that surround any substantive discussion of LEP students and gifted education. We discuss the goals, rationale, and criticisms of gifted education, and seek answers to how high-ability LEP students might better be served in these programs. We examine expanding views of ability and talent, and discuss the issue of identification of high-potential LEP students. We conclude this section by looking at specific levers for change that school staffs need to consider and enact before gifted education can truly serve English language learners.

Next, we illustrate how one school system worked to include and nurture its English language learners in its gifted programs. Rosa Perez, the manager and author of two federally funded projects that combined bilingual education and gifted education, describes how the San Diego City Schools dramatically increased its numbers of LEP students in gifted programs through a broad reform of its entire gifted program. She speaks of the practical and carefully conceived steps the district took to ensure that teachers were adequately prepared to teach LEP students, and from her experience, suggests how any school district might proceed on a similar course.

We also sought the view of a renowned psychologist and researcher on the nature of intelligence, Robert J. Sternberg. Sternberg argues that schooling practices must change to reflect the new value that should be placed on high ability students, rather than on intelligence as identified and conceived in narrow, traditional terms. Such a shift, he contends, is not only desirable, but mandatory as we look to the next millennium and the demands of an increasingly complicated society. Sternberg insists that American educators move beyond the highly politicized context of both gifted and bilingual education to achieve a new and productive means to identify and develop talent in Limited English Proficient learners—something that he argues is much more possible than many educators may realize.

The publication concludes with a brief action plan for school personnel in both bilingual and gifted education. While this publication cannot report the full richness and the widely ranging discussion of the OERI/OBEMLA conference, it is its intent to encourage broader national discussion and implementation of the recommendations and dialogue of the conference participants.

Talents, Schooling, and English Language Learners

When Jo Ann Robisheaux was teaching elementary school students whose first language was not English, she confesses that her perceptions of students' abilities—despite her best efforts and her progressive attitudes about language learning—were nonetheless colored by their limited ability to communicate in their second language. The case of Carla, a fourth–grader with 2 years of English and low grades, changed her mind.

When assigned to write acrostic poems about their native countries, Carla recalled her life in Honduras and created the following poem:

How wonderful it was
On the boat
Near the mouth of the river at
Dawn. The sun was pointing at me
Under the roof of the boat. The
River was wonderful when the sun was
pointing at me
And the boat was soft in the water,
Soft, very soft in the water.
(Robisheaux, 1997)

Carla's imaginative and emotionally evocative use of language provoked Robisheaux into a whole new understanding of students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As a result, she reports, she turned her attention to what she

now sees as a profound intersection between gifted and Limited English Proficient education. She began to broaden identification procedures in her school so that LEP students would not be labeled "slow learners," or be consigned to low-level knowledge, with scant opportunities to exercise their talents. At the same time, she began investigating the teaching strategies that were recommended for gifted students and adapted those strategies for LEP students.

But educators like Robisheaux, who presented her research on LEP students and gifted education at the OERI/OBEMLA Initiative on Limited English Proficient Students With Outstanding Talents Meeting (January 30–31, 1997) in Washington, DC, remain relatively uncommon. While some educators from gifted education and some from bilingual education labor to expand gifted education's parameters and improve the quality of schooling for LEP students, others may consider the problem too complex to solve but still be troubled by the current status of LEP students in American schools. Still others report witnessing less than equitable school practices, but see little avenue for improvement within existing school structures.

Meanwhile, students like Carla continue to enroll in school. What is the world of LEP students in most American schools, and what happens to them if they have extraordinary talents?

Gifted Education and Limited English Proficient Students

Few educators would disagree that Limited English Proficient students often face an environment that is incongruent with their previous experiences when they enter many American schools. Pressure from teachers, administrators, and their American peers to assimilate into U.S. culture can lead to a profound disconnect between home

and life in the outside world for LEP students. A scarcity of strong, progressive bilingual education programs firmly rooted in the best research on language acquisition also can contribute to these students' alienation—an estrangement from both home and school.

More likely than their nonminority peers to come from conditions of persistent poverty, Hispanic LEP students, in particular, are also much more likely to disengage from school entirely (Hispanic Dropout Project 1996). Unchallenged by curricula that seem dull and irrelevant to their lives and bereft of a healthy sense of future, these students suffer a shockingly high dropout rate that persists at approximately 30 percent (NCES 1996). While it is impossible to infer how many of these students have outstanding talents, it is clear that an unacceptable number of young people truncate their schooling prematurely and are swallowed up in low-paying jobs without opportunity for advancement—with little sense of who they might have become with different school experiences. As a result, a boundless potential resource is lost.

Of course, some LEP students do succeed, despite daunting odds. But while Horatio Alger stories are heartwarming—accounts of individuals who triumph over adversity and succeed despite all odds—most educators agree that securing a top-quality, challenging, and supportive education should not become yet another hurdle for students to scale. In fact, an education that sufficiently challenges and prepares youth for productive roles in an increasingly complicated society—economically, technologically, and interpersonally—is what most people espouse. Anything less, they contend, is not democratic.

Yet, even when LEP students engage eagerly in school and are fortunate enough to experience high-quality bilingual education, there is considerable evidence that gaining access to high-status knowledge is especially difficult for them, (Lockwood 1997a; National Research Council 1997). Too often these students are slated

automatically for low tracks or general courses because their limited English language skills fuel a perception that they are less intelligent or able. Even when educators have the best intentions, unless they are schooled in bilingual education and the most progressive theories on language acquisition, they may argue that LEP students are simply too difficult to teach because of their varying English language skills or because their family and cultural backgrounds do not mesh with those of school staff. It is almost impossible, they may contend, to offer them challenging content, hold high expectations for their achievement, and provide a supportive experience to propel them toward success.

Educators and policymakers also struggle with ongoing issues of racism—both overt and subtle—that may affect whether Limited English Proficient students are held to the same expectations as other students. Some educators may err because their intentions are benign—but ultimately misguided. Rather than establishing a demanding, yet nurturant, environment for Limited English Proficient students, they may find themselves so sympathetic with the economic plight or English language difficulties their students experience that they soften their expectations. In some cases, both bilingual and gifted educators simply may not consider their students as candidates for gifted programs, particularly when they need to identify students with outstanding abilities in mathematics, science, and language arts.

How might English language learners be identified for the programs they need if the sole measures for identification are standardized measures that demand facility in English? If additional measures exist that are attentive to cultural and linguistic bias, how can both bilingual and gifted educators ensure that LEP student's aptitudes in mathematics, science, and language arts are identified? Or, once identified, what

responsibility should be taken by staff and program administrators to aid in their success in gifted programs?

In this monograph, we explore key issues related to the inclusion and education of LEP students in gifted and talented programs. Although some bilingual educators may entertain a certain antipathy for gifted programs because their students are often underrepresented, they actually share an educational kinship with their colleagues in gifted education. Both gifted education and bilingual education have become highly politicized; both are particularly vulnerable to funding vagaries; and both have become targets for critics who assert that neither educative effort is necessary. In addition, and most important, educators in both gifted education and bilingual education share a common concern that a vast potential resource of students may be untapped, uneducated, and ultimately lost.

We first outline the arguments advanced for gifted education and lay out the criticisms it endures. Second, we present information about the relationship between bilingualism and cognitive development. Third, we discuss the nature of giftedness. What does it mean to be gifted, to bear special talents? What special implications does "giftedness" bear for LEP students? Fourth, we turn to the identification of potentially gifted students and the special difficulties this presents when students are English language learners. Finally, we look at the starting points for change and what building and district levers might prove most effective.

Gifted Education: Advocates and Critics

Gifted education is one of the most hotly debated entities on the American educational landscape. What exactly is it and why has it become so controversial?

Gifted education is not one seamless entity, a rigid template that does not vary from school to school. In some schools, giftedness is viewed broadly. Proponents of this view prefer to speak of talent development or multiple intelligences, and hold that almost every student has some special aptitude or interest that needs enrichment (Gardner 1983; Renzulli & Reis 1985; Sternberg 1995, 1996). In other schools, gifted education has a much narrower, exclusive meaning. In these schools and districts, students are usually identified for gifted programs through the use of IQ score cut-offs. As an unfortunate consequence, these programs may contain disproportionate numbers of students who are homogeneous in their backgrounds, due to factors that are irrelevant to the talents being sought or that mask student gifts, such as test bias, test-taking skills, and cultural congruence with the questions posed on standardized tests. Of course, gifted programs may also fall somewhere between these two views of giftedness.

While educators in gifted education may disagree about identification procedures and the meaning of giftedness, they usually agree that the primary purpose of gifted education is to meet the unique educational needs of either exceptionally bright or talented students or the exceptional talents that students have to the maximum degree possible. They contend that the regular curriculum does not allow these students sufficient avenues to expand their talent and abilities, and that students whose abilities are not tapped sufficiently will not meet their potential (OERI 1993). In fact, they argue, there is evidence that students with special academic aptitude or multiple talents may disengage from school entirely—discouraged and alienated by instruction that is unresponsive to their needs.

Proponents of gifted education point to underachieving students and low academic standards. They maintain that without adequate educational experiences that

challenge high ability students, a vast resource will be lost to American society (OERI 1993). While they do not take issue with the contention that education needs to improve for all students, they have particular concern with those bearing special talents—those they see as most likely to benefit society in a variety of leadership, creative, and artistic capacities.

Critics of gifted education, on the other hand, perceive it as something special that nurtures the elite—an example of a cold-hearted meritocracy in action. They contend that the route to academic success for all students is to improve the regular curriculum and the quality of educational experiences offered to all children (Oakes 1985; Sapon-Shevin 1994). These critics perceive the special structural arrangements extended to gifted programs, such as pullout classes, Saturday school, or completely separate gifted classes, as hurtful and unjust with little academic merit. While they may agree that the existing curriculum will not challenge students sufficiently to provoke future success, they believe that there is no reason students with special aptitudes cannot thrive in regular classrooms if a concerted effort is made to improve the quality of educational life in those classrooms.

Bilingualism and Cognitive Development

Just as the merits of gifted education continue to be debated, so do the benefits of bilingualism. For example, the relationship between bilingualism and cognitive development is frequently misunderstood. As Hakuta points out (1990), there is a lingering belief in many quarters that bilingualism is something negative, rather than something positive. This conviction, he argues, stems from long-held attitudes about

immigrants as somehow inferior to mainstream Americans even though the United States is predominately a nation of immigrants.

Despite this view, there is a significant body of research that shows that bilingualism is associated positively with greater cognitive flexibility. In comparisons of bilingual and monolingual children, there is evidence that bilingualism leads to what Hakuta terms "superior performance on a variety of intellectual skills" (p. 5).

Research indicates that there is a positive association between bilingualism and cognitive development. Concepts learned in a native language transfer to the second language without the need to learn them all over again. In other words, if a child learns a scientific concept in Spanish, the concept is learned and does not need to be relearned in English. Therefore, this is an advantage for students also retain their fluency in their native tongue.

Although this may seem obvious, misconceptions about bilingualism may lead to the disproportionate placement of Limited English Proficient students in remedial programs simply because they lack full proficiency in English. This has obvious implications for LEP students with unique aptitudes, because buried in remedial programs, they may never reach their potential and, in fact, may leave school early.

What Does It Mean To Be Gifted?

Just as gifted education looks different in different settings, notions of giftedness vary. Increasingly, educators are moving toward an expanded definition of giftedness or away from the term entirely in favor of a view that sees intelligence as multifaceted and talent development as essential for all students (Gardner 1983; Renzulli & Reis 1985; Sternberg 1995, 1996). In particular, the research and work of Howard Gardner,

Joseph Renzulli, and Robert Sternberg has been instrumental in guiding the educational community toward an expanded view of intelligence and ability.

For example, Gardner posited the existence of multiple intelligence, which range from mathematical intelligence to intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner 1983; Lockwood 1997b). Renzulli argues that the term "gifted" be avoided entirely as it carries an elitist meaning and label that only alienates students and families not identified (Lockwood 1997b). He also contends that talent development is the task for all schools and believes that if sufficient enrichment experiences are provided for all students, substantive educational reform will follow. Sternberg has developed a triarchic theory of intelligence (1995). In his work, he emphasizes the importance of viewing youth as composites of multiabilities, which means that instruction must shift to accommodate a multidimensional view of intelligence, rather than emphasizing purely analysis and memory.

The eagerness with which some schools have greeted this expanded view of intelligence suggests that many educators find these theories and research findings validated in their experience and congruent with the democratic ideals of schooling. In a remarkably short period of time, for example, entire programs have been built around Gardner's multiple intelligence theory (Lockwood 1997b). Expanded views of intelligence also seem to calm the equity versus excellence argument central to any discussions of special programs such as gifted and talented education.

Some educators argue that being bilingual is itself a special ability, intelligence, or "gift." They point to the constant negotiation that LEP students must make between two linguistic worlds and cultures, the problem solving, and the sophisticated code-switching such linguistic intelligence requires. In some schools, many LEP students—at a very young age—actually function as translators between their families and school

staff, although this practice is viewed as unfortunate and exploitative by some when carried too far.

Bilingual educators also can make a convincing case that some languages carry higher status than others and this has direct implications for how LEP students are viewed in U.S. schools. Languages common to LEP students, such as Spanish or many of the multitude of Asian languages now represented in U.S. schools, typically are not seen as high-status languages, probably because they are associated with populations more likely to have a lower socioeconomic status. The student who becomes fluent in French or Japanese, however, is much more likely to find such linguistic proficiency commended and rewarded and is also much more likely to be in a higher economic status (Lockwood 1997a).

Identifying Talent and Abilities

Although identification of students for gifted and talented programs continues to be a conundrum with which educators' struggle, Limited English Proficient students are affected most severely. In fact, most LEP students fall outside the purview of schools almost entirely when students are identified for gifted and talented programs. If standardized tests or IQ tests are used exclusively, students' English language aptitude and cultural differences will influence their scores. Even if other measures are used, language can influence student scores if directions are given in English, rather than the native language.

In addition, researchers at the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented have identified other barriers to the identification of LEP and minority students, which include:

- teachers' inability to recognize indicators of potential giftedness,
- lack of a stimulating early home environment, more frequent for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and
- teachers' prejudicial attitudes (Frasier et al. 1995, x-xi).

Perhaps the most profound factor that affects the identification of LEP students for gifted programs is the difficulty that school staff have in identifying unique abilities in LEP students. This inability, the researchers argue, is affected by cultural bias in teachers inexperienced in cultural differences that may affect learning styles or parental attitudes toward school. The extent to which teachers and other school staff can become comfortable with the home cultures and ethnicities of their LEP students can result in a greater awareness and early recognition of outstanding abilities.

The same researchers (Frasier et al., 1995) concluded that although there is a popular teacher-held perception that parents of LEP students do not involve their children in educational activities at home that support their in-school studies, that belief is actually often incorrect. Again, increasing teachers' knowledge bases on the home cultures of LEP students should aid in more positive home-school interactions and perceptions of LEP students' abilities.

Most progressive gifted educators now agree that just as an expanded view of intelligence and ability is necessary, broader identification of students with outstanding aptitudes must follow. They point to the need for multipronged identification that should include test scores, teacher recommendations, student portfolios, and consideration of special variables—such as language, socioeconomic background, and culture.

School staff need progressive, substantive staff development to supplement and expand their knowledge of other cultural and linguistic groups. They also need support

in learning how giftedness manifests itself within cultural norms. This knowledge, when supported with opportunities to pilot new programs geared toward introducing LEP students to high-status knowledge, will aid both in the development of new identification procedures that, while perhaps imperfect, will result in expanding the numbers of LEP students participating in gifted and talented programs.

Where Do We Begin?: The Levers for Change

"Here we go again—yet another "reform" that will net little." The prospect of yet another educational initiative—making gifted education more authentically inclusive of LEP students with outstanding abilities—may leave educators in both gifted and bilingual education at the least exhausted and at the best bewildered. Understaffed and overworked, it may seem impossible to these school staff to increase the numbers of LEP students in gifted programs and then support them so that they succeed.

Overcoming skepticism and feelings of powerlessness are key to providing inclusive gifted education for Limited English Proficient students. Although national and state initiatives provide the impetus for large-scale reforms, there is something peculiarly American about putting a local stamp on a federal or state initiative. This is abundantly clear in the current case of national content and performance standards, which presently are being tailored to fit local needs in hundreds of districts nationwide.

What, then, are gifted and bilingual educators to do? Some basic starting points are remarkably similar to starting points for any educational reform initiative. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Establishing a cognitive and philosophical shift to a view of youth—including youth not yet proficient in English—as high ability students, with accompanying multipronged identification procedures to identify and nurture youth with outstanding talents.
- Forging a commitment to the long-term social benefit of redesigning gifted education to include and meet the needs of LEP students.
- Collaborating across programs; a willingness to negotiate and entertain different points of view.
- Building on strengths and program maturity.
- Establishing a clear and coherent vision of inclusive gifted education.
- Bringing the issue of LEP students and gifted education to a heightened level of public awareness.
- Creating an action plan with realistic timelines.
- Securing adequate teacher training and inservice, including training in identification procedures for bilingual education teachers.

It should be noted that not all of these variables need to be in place before change begins.

Viewing youth as high ability; establishing multipronged identification procedures. If gifted education is to be truly representative of all student populations—and fully harness the talents of all ethnicities, races, and linguistic groups—school staff in all programs must shift their view of intelligence as a single, limited entity to a much broader view of talent and abilities. They need to search aggressively for strong mathematics and science potential among LEP students, rather than limiting themselves to talents that may be more easily identifiable and not confined by language proficiency,

such as aptitudes in art and music. As staff begins to make this cognitive shift, they must also make a practical commitment to the use of multipronged identification procedures so that English language learners are not unrecognized. As they make the transition to what may appear to be imperfect identification measures, they can be helped by the recognition that narrow, traditional measures of IQ already severely limit the numbers of youth with talents who are eligible for gifted programs. Rather than becoming mired in an endless debate about the best identification procedures, educators in both gifted and bilingual education need to settle on a working procedure, begin to use it, and continue to refine it as their program grows and changes.

Committing to the long-term social benefit of redesigning gifted education to include LEP students. As educators expand their views of ability and intelligence, they also must make a real commitment to the inclusion and education of LEP students in gifted programs. If they pursue their own argument about losing the most able youth because appropriate educational experiences are not available to them, they will find that continuing gifted programs that do not adequately represent LEP youth is an intolerable state of affairs. Since public monies, supporting public education, provide public benefit, this is an especially persuasive rationale for gifted educators who want to reach as many youth with outstanding talents as possible.

Authentic and productive collaboration. Almost any reform effort emphasizes the need for school staff to work collaboratively with each other, with parents, and with other members of the community. As Sizer has pointed out, while collaboration is difficult and demanding, it is ultimately rewarding and necessary if programmatic efforts are to avoid parochialism (Lockwood 1997b).

Gifted and bilingual educators can also learn from progressive case studies where gifted programs have undergone significant change or where districts have

labored to improve their bilingual education programs. At the systemic level, they can be informed by the experiences of districts and schools who have worked with a national reform, such as Success For All. One important demand such programs place on schools that want to participate in their efforts is that some degree of initial consensus must be secured before schools proceed.

Conference participants agreed that gifted and bilingual educators need to break down barriers between their programs and begin a substantive dialogue with timelines and goals. In other words, brainstorming between programs with no end in sight is not likely to create change, but brainstorming with a nucleus of motivated personnel from both gifted and bilingual programs—with a timeline that includes discrete actions—is far more likely to produce results.

Build on strengths. Rather than waiting for new funding to appear, entrepreneurial educators in both gifted and bilingual education work from their areas of strength. If there is more maturity in bilingual education programs, the change initiative might begin in that program, with cooperation with gifted education. Again, lessons can be learned from national reform efforts, including Success for All and James Comer's School Development Program, both of which insist that scapegoating and blame placing are completely unproductive and only lead to increased animosity. All problems must become collective and be collectively solved, but distinct responsibilities need to be outlined so that procrastination and postponement do not result.

Increase public awareness of LEP students and their talents. The power of the press—and galvanizing public opinion—is a considerable tool that gifted and bilingual educators need to wield. As they begin their collaborative efforts, involving a carefully chosen community team that serves a public relations/outreach role to the media, parents, and other community members can only serve their efforts in a positive fashion.

This core team can garner support from a variety of community agencies, seek external funds, solicit ideas, and become a powerful tool to shape the decisions of district administrators and school boards.

Secure adequate teacher training and professional development. Although both bilingual education and gifted education are particularly susceptible to funding cuts, a substantial percentage of their budgets needs to be allocated toward adequate teacher training and professional development—particularly as it relates to inclusion and support of LEP students in gifted programs. As conference participants made amply clear, gifted and bilingual educators are usually preoccupied with their own programs. Cross-training in both bilingual education and gifted education is necessary so that teachers are not overwhelmed by new demands placed upon them and have the skills to cope. And if students are housed in bilingual programs where they do not interact with other teachers, it is particularly important that bilingual teachers be skilled advocates for the identification and placement of their students in gifted programs.

Adequate and expert professional development needs to be undertaken—professional development that extends beyond the "one-shot" workshop that offers scant opportunity for teachers to apply new ideas or obtain feedback when they do attempt to shift their teaching in new directions. Districts can utilize school staff from both bilingual and gifted programs, as well as the judicious use of outside authorities to aid in validating their efforts.

Engage in ongoing evaluation from a variety of sources. Evaluation, conference participants agreed, is not only necessary, but also vital as gifted education expands its parameters to nurture LEP students. How well are programs proceeding? What timeline is realistic? Is there an action timeline, with responsibilities assigned to each person involved in the process? Is district evaluation both quantitative and qualitative?

Are gifted and bilingual educators able to obtain additional evaluation from an external source that will inform ongoing efforts? Finally, are school staffs prepared to deal with evaluations that are less than 100 percent positive and make necessary program changes? All these questions form the nucleus of plans for evaluation of new efforts to include and nurture LEP students in gifted programs.

Clearly, the case of Limited English Proficient students and their growing role in gifted programs is a knotty and complex topic, but one that is overdue for schools and school staff to address. As demographics tilt to an increasingly multicultural society in the next millennium, the resource of Limited English Proficient students in U.S. schools needs to be identified, nurtured, and encouraged so that contemporary society can benefit from its considerable promise.

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Appendix A

Inclusive and Authentic Gifted Education for English Language Learners: The San Diego Experience

Since the 1980's, the San Diego City School System has demonstrated its commitment to inclusion and full participation of minority students in its gifted and talented education (GATE) programs—with a special focus on Hispanic Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Beginning with Project Excel in 1989, federally funded through Title VII monies—and continuing with Project First Step, funded under the Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act—the district has deliberately increased its pool of high-ability Hispanic LEP students in its GATE programs.

The San Diego City Schools' reform of its GATE programs reflects its desire both to respond to changing demographics in the district and discover talent at early ages so it can be adequately nurtured and developed. Their progress has been substantial. In 1986, out of a total of 8,205 students enrolled in GATE programs, Hispanic students numbered only 673. In 1997, Hispanic students numbered 3,924—18.8 percent of the 20,879 students in GATE programs. Minority students currently number approximately 50 percent of all students enrolled in GATE programs in the San Diego City Schools. Currently, approximately 100 teachers holding district certification in both bilingual education and gifted/talented education work in the San Diego GATE programs.

Both Project Excel and Project First Step exemplify the thoroughness with which the San Diego City Schools approached the reform of its GATE programs. Project Excel was designed to increase both the representation and successful participation of high-ability Hispanic LEP students (K–2) in GATE programs; Project First Step built upon

Project Excel's design but added a special emphasis on identifying preschool, high-ability Hispanic LEP students and providing them with needed support to ensure their successful transition into GATE programs.

Key components of the San Diego City Schools' reform of its GATE programs include early identification of high-ability Hispanic LEP students—based on multiple criteria—along with specific initiatives designed for teachers and parents.

- *Participating teachers received college credit to obtain district dual certification as both bilingual and gifted teachers.*
- *Participating teachers received specific training to adapt differentiated instruction in both Spanish and English.*
- *Parents of students enrolled in Project Excel and Project First Step participated in inservice activities designed for parents to increase their awareness of at-home help for their children.*
- *Parents were invited and welcomed into classrooms to observe enrichment programs conducted by community mentors.*
- *Parents learned specific "how-tos" for similar nurturing techniques at home.*
- *Community mentors were recruited and selected based on their varying skills in different fields as well as different levels of language ability.*
- *Off-site enrichment activities were plentiful and chosen to supplement students' in-class curricula.*
- *Potentially gifted Hispanic LEP students were identified through the use of multiple criteria to ensure that talent was not overlooked. These criteria included a variety of tests, such as the nonverbal Raven's Progressive Matrices; high achievement (80th percentile or better) in reading, language, and/or mathematics on Aprenda; and a consideration of student environment, economic*

status, language proficiency, culture, health, and other social and environmental factors.

The San Diego experience is noteworthy not only because of its record of representation for Hispanic LEP students in GATE programs, but also for its insistence on ensuring their successful participation in these programs. By beginning identification and nurturing activities at the preschool level, their successful transition to GATE programs and active participation in these programs has been greatly eased.

Rosa Perez was the Project Manager/Author of Project Excel (1989–1993) and Project First Step (1992–1995). Currently she continues as a GATE Curriculum Resource Teacher for the San Diego City Schools, where she began her teaching career as a bilingual teacher in 1976.

If Rosa Perez dramatically condenses her experience as a key change agent for the San Diego City Schools' GATE programs to a few words of advice to other educators, her message is straightforward: Work from your strengths, maintain a broad and inclusive focus, and do not hesitate to enact reform.

All too frequently, Perez maintains, when educators contemplate reforming GATE programs to ensure equal access and successful participation for Hispanic LEP students, they are stymied by the sheer multiplicity of barriers they face. How do schools identify high-ability students if they lack sufficient English to take traditional IQ tests? How do GATE teachers without bilingual certification or expertise adequately differentiate curricula for LEP students? Is it even possible to include high-ability Hispanic LEP students in GATE programs without significantly changing program standards and creating different levels of giftedness?

It is not only possible, Perez insists, but imperative—and she advises educators wary of failure to begin their efforts wherever existing structures are already smoothly functioning and sturdy. "When people ask where to start, I always say: Start wherever the structures already are built up," she emphasizes.

Many educators share the belief, Perez points out, that they must start completely anew—with substantial additional monies. But this belief, while well intentioned, can delay much-needed reform, she insists.

"In the long run, funding alone won't give you what you need," Perez explains, "so we must take what we have and begin there. If there is more program maturity in bilingual education—meaning more long-standing structures—that is the place to begin. It is very important to start your efforts in the program that already has the strongest teacher training efforts or the strongest parent involvement program.

"And," she adds, "it is also important to seek out people with dual backgrounds for leadership roles that have a philosophical commitment to both programs. In my situation, I had credibility in bilingual education—and I was a GATE resource teacher. If you don't have people with dual backgrounds, you work to develop the talent of the individuals who are interested."

Perez makes the process of achieving both equity and excellence sound deceptively simple, but the San Diego experience is distinguished by both its careful planning and multipronged approach plus a shrewd use of available funds. In particular, Perez points to twin essential elements: collaboration between programmatic efforts coupled with a broad focus that avoids stagnant, nonproductive contemplation of the problems associated with identification issues.

Collaboration and a Broad Focus

Of course, collaboration is difficult in the best of circumstances, Perez acknowledges. Many educators are preoccupied with their own programs and may not realize that their own efforts can be fortified and expanded if they reach out to other programs. But true collaboration, she emphasizes, no longer is an option for educators seeking both equity and excellence. If students from all ethnic and racial backgrounds are to participate fully and successfully in GATE programs, collaboration across programs is essential.

"What prevents us from moving forward in both bilingual programs and GATE programs," Perez reflects, "is that we all have our own legislation, our own monies, and our own frustrations to contend with. To truly collaborate means overcoming all sorts of hurdles but that process can be aided by working within any reform effort underway district-wide."

In San Diego, collaboration was eased by the attitudes and cooperation of building principals whom sustained the GATE reform. "They supported our approach," Perez says, "which was talent development, not giftedness. Talent development is much more inclusive—and there is no danger of labeling a child. Frequently, the 'gifted' label is something that educators do not like."

The result of authentic collaboration, she believes, is permanent, positive change not an educational trend that will be defunct in 5 years. "When we talk about GATE programs," Perez observes, "and when we talk about programs for Limited English Proficient students, we are talking about two programs that are controversial and politicized. In order to really effect change, we must move beyond that. We must learn to work from our strengths and build upon them to create broad reform."

And when educators contemplate reform of their GATE programs, exactly how to identify the most promising students—particularly from non-traditional populations—is too often the hurdle that cannot be scaled. Identification, Perez says, remains politically volatile, divisive, and contentious and educators need to confront its imperfections, improve the process, but continue to move forward. Instead, she adds, educators frequently become mired in the complexities of identification and fail to accomplish substantive reform.

Perez's vision, however, is much more extensive. "We need instead," she argues, "to undertake a general reform of the entire gifted program in schools and districts. We need to review and revise our programs so that populations not typically included will be represented."

Educators who focus solely on identification issues, she maintains, may be well intentioned: they believe that if identification practices shift from total reliance on IQ score cut-offs, gifted and talented programming will change as well. But Perez, nonetheless, believes that a sole focus on identification prevents progress and she suggests that it can be a comfortable berth to avoid change.

"When a district has an effort working in isolation, and when that effort only focuses on identification, we cannot achieve true change," she contends. "We need to realize that while we can improve our identification of talented students, there will never be a perfect test. We need to move on from that single focus."

Beginnings: The San Diego Experience

What spurred the San Diego City Schools to reform their GATE programs? Outside pressures—coupled with changing demographics—exerted significant force on

the district, Perez explains, which began what turned into a long-term and substantial reform of its GATE programs in the early 1980's.

"At that time, our student population was 80 percent white and 20 percent minority. What occurred was very, very important. We had a very strong community advisory group to the superintendent—who had just arrived in the district. This group, the Mexican-American Advisory Committee, was able to exert pressure on the system. The superintendent, who was a very savvy administrator, supported reform of the GATE programs."

GATE program personnel first examined their identification procedures and identified faulty practices—but Perez emphasizes that the superintendent's support was not only philosophical, but also practical. Additional resources were readily available in the form of extra psychologists, an expansion in the number of schools with GATE programs, and resource teachers.

"We were forced to reform," she says simply. "The reform efforts affected the entire educational GATE program, not solely the diverse part of the student population."

But change was not instant, she is careful to emphasize, nor was it undertaken in a superficial, glib manner for the sake of meeting meaningless rhetorical or political objectives. "For almost 10 years, we renewed and revised our identification process to service all students—inclusive of Limited English Proficient students. We also had support first from Title VII monies with Project Excel, and then from the Javits program."

And a change in identification procedures was not incidental to the district's success with inclusion of LEP students, she adds. "One of the instruments we now use is the Raven's Progressive Matrices. We moved to multiple criteria, to teacher nominations to insure that students from all populations within the district would be nominated."

But this fine-tuning of identification procedures did not allow delay, she points out. "We were under the gun," she adds frankly. "We were supposed to make a difference. We also had research that supported what we were doing, a period to experiment, and an external body of experts brought in by the superintendent."

These external experts, she says, not only provided district staff with research and practical support, but also helped legitimize their efforts. "We were working with individuals with expertise in bilingual education and in gifted education," she points out, "and they helped to shape our efforts."

While money wasn't lavish, there was always an allocation for evaluation, particularly external evaluation. This component not only helped San Diego staff refine their reform efforts, but also demonstrated to their constituencies their program's strengths.

What did this all mean in terms of inclusion and full participation in GATE programs? The change, she notes, has been dramatic. "We went from 80 percent majority, 20 percent minority, to almost 50/50 representation in our GATE programs."

The Evolution of a Culturally Sensitive GATE Program

As San Diego's GATE program evolved through the 1980's and 1990's, GATE educators used Title VII funds to implement Project Excel. Perez explains that the project, which focused on early intervention for kindergartners through second-graders, was integral in weaving second language learners into GATE programs at an early point of their development.

"Not only did we realize that we needed an early intervention," she recalls, "but we saw that we had to introduce a different curriculum. We ended up with a model that

could be used in any pocket of the city where, for whatever reason, students didn't have the readiness they needed before taking the test to enter GATE programs."

This different curriculum, Perez explains, focused first on process, or understanding the teacher's questions and the thinking processes used by students to answer or problem-solve. Student readiness was also reinforced through out-of-school opportunities, including field trips and the use of community mentors, so that students could use their cultural, linguistic, and social resources to learn. The result was the creation of a learning environment that focused on student ideas and interests—and drew upon their cultural backgrounds, rather than negating them.

Working with the district's teacher certification process, Perez adjusted it to emphasize cultural and linguistic diversity, and reward teachers interested in dual district certification as both GATE and bilingual teachers. "Teachers received both college credit from participating in both projects as well as district certification," she explains. "As a result, we currently have a cadre of over a hundred bilingual teachers who teach in GATE programs."

Clearly, Perez believes that building a qualified workforce equipped to teach both LEP students and students identified as gifted and talented is key to any GATE program's success. The dual teacher certification process focused on characteristics of gifted and talented student types; identification; theoretical foundations of giftedness; curriculum for gifted and talented learners; instructional strategies; parenting the gifted; and professional growth through participation in local and statewide gifted organizations.

Legitimizing Gifted Programs

Increasingly, GATE programs have been criticized as elitist and inequitable. Critics of gifted and talented programs have leveled the charge that what works with children identified as gifted works with all children, and that gifted education is no more than the meritocracy in action. How does Perez react to these critics? Are there additional problems for the GATE programs struggling simply to maintain their existence—let alone expand to include nontraditional populations?

"People who hold the perception that gifted programs are elitist," Perez says, "simply have a lack of knowledge about gifted education." There are also many misconceptions about gifted students and gifted programs. The gifted community is partially responsible for these.

"We haven't articulated very clearly what we do and why we do it. Part of the controversy, of course, lies in the definition of giftedness. Over the past 20 years it has taken on a broader definition, but we haven't communicated that adequately."

Diversity and giftedness are completely synonymous, she adds. "Giftedness is all about diversity," she points out. "But we don't do a good job of explaining differentiated curricula and how it matches the gifted learner. It's common to believe that we should provide exactly the same thing for every student."

Those students with high ability in a variety of areas deserve something extra, she argues—at the least, an educational experience that expands and develops whatever talents they have. Clearly, Perez—like other educators in the gifted educational community—believes that developing talent in high-ability students cannot be fully realized in the regular classroom.

"It's a complex issue," she adds, "but increased understanding of the goals of gifted education would help break down those misconceptions about what it is about."

Barriers and Obstacles

Although San Diego's experience appears exemplary, Perez quickly identifies obstacles that had to be overcome. "Not every teacher who participated initially was 100 percent behind the project," she emphasizes. "We had to deal with some of those prevailing misconceptions about gifted programs; that gifted programs were elitist, that they were racist. In our teacher training over a period of years, we have been able to diffuse those attitudes."

"We were able to begin our efforts because our approach was inclusive, not exclusive. We intended to work with all of the primary grade classrooms. My task was to show that the projects would benefit everyone. Significant findings from Project Excel were helpful, especially because the project lasted 5 years and we were able to evaluate its success."

When Project Excel began, Perez remembers facing angry bilingual teachers who confronted her with their deep-seated beliefs that gifted education was elitist, prejudiced, and exclusive. "We dealt with those beliefs," she says mildly, "and expanded the knowledge base. The strongest critics later became the strongest advocates."

Although she remembers their opposition, she welcomed it. "They were experiencing cognitive dissonance," she says, "which was good. They saw that the content was genuine and that we weren't going to take anything away from bilingual education. We were going to build on, not subtract."

But she isn't completely satisfied—perhaps a key to any educational reformer who experiences success. "We could have done more," she insists. "We are now changing the gifted education process. We are including more competencies dealing specifically with the culturally and linguistically diverse gifted. These aspects of our program came from those projects."

"Our cadre of bilingual teacher of the gifted is also outstanding. When the projects started, did I plan to build leadership in those teachers? No, I only wanted success in the gifted programs. But these teachers showed us so much, because they demonstrated how a differentiated curriculum can be modified for the primary grades."

Despite its impressive record of inclusiveness and expansion to nontraditional student populations, San Diego's GATE program was buffeted by the vicissitudes of funding and politics in the early 1990's. "We had annual evaluations prepared by the district's department of evaluation," Perez says, "and they were always exemplary. We were a qualitative program, and the evaluations were qualitative."

But in retrospect, she would change both the authors of the evaluations and their methodology. "It would have helped us if the evaluations had been external, and if they had included quantitative data. Yes, we were reaching equity, but where were our students long-term? That is all useful information we could have shown our board of education—and would have helped our departmental status."

Perhaps Perez's most particular point is that there is no endpoint to reform. "Nothing is ever finished," she concludes. "There is more we could have done and there is more that we want to accomplish. Any educational reform needs to have that attitude to protect from becoming complacent."

Appendix B

Identifying and Nurturing Talent for All Students: A Conversation With Robert J. Sternberg

What are the difficulties of identifying high-ability students for gifted programs—particularly language minority students? What does it mean to be "gifted"? In what ways does the testing industry need to change to accommodate assessing multiability students such as limited English proficient students? What abilities should educators seek to identify and nurture, and how does instruction need to shift to accommodate a broader conception of giftedness? We asked these and other questions of Robert J. Sternberg, who is IBM Professor of Psychology and Education in the Department of Psychology at Yale University.

Sternberg is most well known for his triarchic theory of intelligence, triangular theory of love, theory of mental self-government, and investment theory of creativity (developed in collaboration with Todd Lubart). He has written over 500 articles, books, and book chapters, including Beyond IQ, The Triangle of Love, Metaphors of Mind, Defying the Crowd (with Todd Lubart), and most recently, Successful Intelligence. The recipient of numerous awards from organizations that include the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, the Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology, and the National Association for Gifted Children, he is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Psychological Association, and the American Psychology Society.

Even a cursory look at some of the main issues that face educators in gifted and talented programs, Robert Sternberg points out, reveals a thicket of contention, disagreement, and criticism—both internal and external. Gifted education, like bilingual education, has become politicized and beleaguered by critics who argue that both programs are unnecessary.

In addition, educators in gifted programs who seek a broader definition of giftedness face a lack of consensus on identification practices, let alone issues related to curricula and inclusiveness. All these factors, Sternberg explains, are clear evidence why minority populations continue to be underrepresented in gifted and talented education (GATE) programs, and why students with multifaceted abilities may not be adequately served.

Speaking first about identification of high-ability students, Sternberg reveals why the issue has become a sticking point for so many educators. "One of the main issues," he begins, "is whether students should be identified on the basis of 'g'—general ability or IQ—or whether one goes beyond that. Some believe that IQ is the best because the score gives them an objective measure. Others feel that they need more."

The question, Sternberg adds, then becomes: What more? "Do you only use cognitive measures, such as multiple intelligence's beyond just 'g,' or do you move to affective measures such as personality and motivation?"

Another concern, he adds, is the degree to which assessments need to be objective. "Can you use subjective assessments of teachers, parents, and the students themselves?" he asks. "The whole argument revolves around one central question: What does giftedness mean?"

Has the gifted and talented educational community reached consensus about the meaning of giftedness—or is that an area of controversy as well?

Sternberg points to narrow pockets of agreement, but no prevailing consensus. "These very, very fundamental issues are still unresolved," he says. "And they become even more complex, because even among those who want to only use intellectual measures, there is disagreement as to how high one has to score to be gifted. What score means gifted on an IQ test? 130, 135, 140?"

Given that educators working in gifted and talented programs continue to struggle—and not infrequently, to disagree—when they work to include high-ability Hispanic Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in their programs, how can they proceed sensibly and equitably with their efforts? Is there a research base that supports not only new identification procedures, but instructional practices geared toward multiability students? How can nontraditional populations—such as Hispanic LEP students—be included in GATE programs in ways that avoid accusations of political correctness?

"There are so many difficulties," Sternberg replies. "If only objective testing is used, these kids are at an obvious disadvantage. This applies even if nonverbal tests are used, because nonverbal tests still assume a certain kind of socialization. Often language is used to tell the kids what to do on the test."

His own research, he reports, clearly indicates that when students are assessed on broader measures of giftedness, a much more diverse student population automatically qualifies for gifted programs. "In the OERI-supported study we did with high school students, we measured creative and practical abilities as well as analytical forms of giftedness," he says.

"What did we find? The analytical kids tended to be more traditional in their appearance. They were mostly white, at a higher socioeconomic level, and attended better schools. But the kids who scored high in creative and practical giftedness were

more diverse socioeconomically, ethnically, and in terms of previous educational background."

These findings have long-reaching implications for schooling, Sternberg maintains—and question prevailing practice that values primarily memorization and analysis. "If you have a creative kid and you're only teaching in a way that emphasizes memory and analytical ability, why would you expect the kid to do well?," he asks rhetorically.

"Our system disenfranchises creatively and practically gifted kids by creating a vicious circle in which we measure primarily analytical and memory abilities. We then teach in a way that values those abilities and we assess achievement in the same way. We value those abilities so that the people who are high in those areas look good and the people who are high in other abilities don't."

Testing plays a pernicious role as well, he says. "The tests we use appear to have high validity because they are all a part of the system. But when we assess kids more broadly, kids who would not have done well begin to perform at high levels."

Even more impressively, students who are taught in ways that value all abilities—analytical, creative, and practical—achieve at higher levels than if they are taught in standard ways that emphasize solely memory or memory with critical thinking added on. "All kids stand to benefit," Sternberg enlarges, "if you teach in a way that emphasizes all of these abilities because they can encode the information in multiple ways. They can see it analytically, creatively, and practically."

Some teachers' resistance to this instructional shift can be seen when they argue that they must teach to emphasize analytical abilities, Sternberg adds, so that students will score well on standardized tests, but there is little truth to that assertion. "Students

taught in ways that value all abilities," he says, "even do better on objective multiple choice items."

Inclusiveness and Gifted Education

Given these current findings, are there signs that the gifted educational community is progressing in its efforts to identify and nurture nontraditional student populations? Or do these areas of contention keep the gifted community at a stalemate? In his reply, Sternberg points to diversity and spottiness, and the danger of generalizations.

"In some communities," he says, "nothing is being done and in others a great deal is being done. There is, of course, the argument that affirmative action is not the right model, because it implies that kids who need it aren't as good. In our research, we have moved away from that. It is clear that we have only tested kids for the narrowest set of abilities.

"Once you go beyond that, affirmative action isn't even needed. I'm not opposed to it, but we can have the same result without giving the appearance that we have preferences. We can have very diverse representations of students simply by allowing kids to show their creative and practical abilities."

But identification alone, he insists, is not the answer—no matter how broadly it is enacted. Without enlightened and broadened instruction, the most informed identification will net little. "If we then only teach in conventional ways, then, of course, we are setting students up for failure," he emphasizes.

The politicization of both gifted and bilingual education yields nothing productive, Sternberg insists, and he points out how fruitless it is to become enmeshed in political considerations when the quality of education for so many students is at issue.

"My theory is based on abilities," he says tartly, "not politics." Creative and practical abilities are important to life. In a world that's changing very quickly, we can no longer afford to do things they way they have always been done. Even the job a person has continues to change while the person has it. It can have the same name, but the individual has to learn to use computers, the Internet, to respond to new supervisors, to new technology, or to new products.

"The extent to which we have those abilities has nothing to do with politics. We need to forget about that and focus on what the abilities are that one needs to cope with the world."

Changing Instructional and Assessment Practices

Shifting instruction to accommodate multifaceted abilities places new demands on teachers, Sternberg says, but these challenges can be met. Rather than first emphasizing specific pedagogical skills, he points to the need for understanding and empathy.

"Teachers ideally need to become more aware of their students' cultural backgrounds," he insists. "This is particularly important because our research shows that different groups have different conceptions about what intelligence means. What one group considers intelligent may not be considered intelligent by another. The teacher has to understand what values have been placed on intelligence in different

cultures or cultural groups in order to understand what they are trying to excel in—and this may or may not match the teacher's values."

Sternberg's research supports the importance of cultural congruence with the school's values. In one study, Sternberg and his colleagues looked at groups of Latinos, Asians, and Anglos in California and found very different conceptions of intelligence between the three groups. "The better the match between the parents' conception of intelligence and that of the teachers," he emphasizes, "the better the kids do in school."

In Defense of Gifted Education

The politicization of gifted education has been accompanied by a barrage of fire from critics who charge it is elitist, exclusive, and ultimately, not necessary, a type of educational garnish easily discarded. These critics contend that the type of education served up to gifted students would be good for all students, but not all students can partake of it. Are their claims justified? Why are gifted programs needed?

"I believe that what is good for the gifted is good for everybody," Sternberg says, "and I think schools should try to improve education for everyone." But what does that mean, to improve education for everyone? If you have a kid who can learn mathematics quickly, what is the advantage to holding that child back?

"Kids need to be taught in a way that will maximize their opportunities to learn. If a child is able to excel in math or science, we don't want to hold that child back anymore than we want to rush a kid who is not ready to proceed rapidly. We want to teach kids in a way that is effective for all of them."

He adds, "I don't see how giving all kids the best possible opportunities is inconsistent with gifted education."

The perception that gifted programs are elitist has become too ready an accusation, Sternberg contends, and deserves a second, in-depth look. "Gifted education has become too politicized," he points out. "Many people who are in research basically are politicians wearing the clothing of researchers, doing research with preordained results. There certainly are elitist programs, but each program needs to be judged on its own merits rather than lumped with all others in a mass name-calling."

Perhaps Sternberg's most emphatic point has to do with the multifaceted nature of giftedness—which when considered in tandem with an improved understanding of different cultures, could reform gifted education completely. "Another misconception, which can unfortunately be fostered by test scores, is that people either are gifted or they aren't," he says.

But there are many ways to be gifted—not just one way, he concludes. "You *can* turn gifted education into an elitist enterprise if you do a bad job. But if you look at giftedness as multifaceted and help people to capitalize on their strengths, that doesn't occur."

Appendix C

Assessment, Awareness, and Action: A Self-Evaluation Tool for Gifted and Bilingual Educators

The following self-evaluation tool is intended to assess where your school and district falls on a continuum of awareness and action as related to LEP students with outstanding abilities and gifted education.

Awareness, Philosophy, and Understanding

In my school and/or district. . .

1. Gifted and bilingual staffs communicate with each other about programmatic goals.

   Always Frequently Sometimes Never

2. Staff in gifted education are committed to multipronged identification procedures for students in gifted programs.

   Always Frequently Sometimes Never

3. Staff in bilingual education sees opportunities for their students in gifted programs and believes gifted education has something to offer LEP students.

   Always Frequently Sometimes Never

4. Staff in gifted education shows an understanding of and appreciation for students from linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never

5. Gifted and bilingual staffs have a philosophical commitment to the inclusion and success of LEP students in gifted programs.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never

6. Gifted staffs are committed to a multidimensional view of ability.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never

Action and Implementation

1. Gifted and bilingual staffs have established a core committee that will lead a change effort to include and nurture proportionate numbers of LEP students in gifted education.

Yes No In process

2. Gifted and bilingual staff have a clear vision of gifted education that authentically identifies and nurtures LEP youth.

Yes No In process

3. Key staffs, including program personnel and administrators, have worked with community representatives to increase public awareness of LEP students and their role in gifted education.

Yes No In process

4. Gifted and bilingual staffs meet on a regularly scheduled basis with community members, eliciting their feedback and support for inclusive gifted education.

Yes No In process

5. Distinct timelines for discrete goals have been established to increase the numbers of LEP students in gifted programs.

Yes No In process

6. Concrete responsibilities have been determined and have been assigned to gifted and bilingual staff, as well as other key district personnel.

Yes No In process

7. Evaluation plans to determine program success as well as needed refinement have been established.

Yes No In process

8. The school board is fully cognizant of and educated about the effort to identify and nurture LEP students in gifted programs.

Yes No In process

Appendix D

Project GOTCHA

(Project Galaxies of Thinking and Creative Heights of Achievements)

Project GOTCHA is a Title VII, Academic Excellence program, under the Office of Bilingual Education and Language Minority Affairs, U.S. Department of Education. It was developed and implemented in Broward County Public Schools, Fort Lauderdale, Florida during the funding cycles of 1987–1996. Currently, dissemination activities have been assumed by the coordinator and trainers of the GOTCHA Project under International Educational Consultants, Inc.

The goals of the program are to:

- Develop a coordinating plan with national, state, and local educational agencies to disseminate information about the GOTCHA project.
- Develop, validate, and disseminate information on instructional materials, guides, and training modules used in the project.
- Train potential users in the adoption of the program.

History of Program

Project GOTCHA evolved from the Bilingual Exceptional Student Education Demonstration Project, funded by OBEMLA in Broward County, Florida, from 1980 to 1985. After 7 years of successfully meeting its objectives and providing data to document its success, Project GOTCHA was awarded for its promising practices and effectiveness. Project GOTCHA became one of the Academic Excellence Programs in

1987. In the following 9 years (1987–1996) Project GOTCHA disseminated its program practices and trained teachers that met eligibility criteria. Project GOTCHA was implemented in 15 states, identified and served over 5,000 students, trained over 800 teachers, and trained well over 2,000 parents.

Program Overview

Project GOTCHA identifies and serves gifted, creative, and talented limited English proficient (LEP) students in grades 1–8. This program is designed to reach nationwide local education agency personnel who wish to develop similar programs, and individual teachers who wish to incorporate these methods in their classroom activities. There are two major characteristics that differentiate the GOTCHA Project from other LEP gifted programs. The first is the emphasis on the unique creative abilities of each child; and the second is early intervention of language minority students.
The program consists of four components: Student Identification, Staff Development, Instructional Approach/Materials, and Parent Training.

Identification Component

The identification of students is one of the main components of the program. It is unique in its reliability for selecting students who possess creative and talented characteristics within a unique population. Linguistically, these children are more likely to demonstrate their superior abilities in their home language.

Consideration, therefore has been given to their experiential background; home, community, and school values; and other cultural factors. There are three stages in the identification process:

1. Nomination—in this stage teachers nominate children for the program based on supportive information (such as informal observations, and samples of student's work) and orientation sessions. A Parent/Community Form is sent home for parents to nominate their child. A Peer Nomination Form is also used by the teacher to obtain additional information from still another source.
2. Identification—during this stage, more information is collected about the nominated students. This information is based on the scores obtained on the Renzulli Checklist (adapted), the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Figural), and additional project and work samples. If available, achievement test scores and/or reports card grades are considered.
3. Placement—the GOTCHA teachers evaluate the Matrix Form which contains a profile of the student's performance. The students that meet eligibility criteria are then placed in the GOTCHA Program. There are seven criteria on the matrix, students need to qualify on five of the criteria. The implementation consists of two models, inclusion or pullout.

Staff Development

Awareness Presentation: Provides all interested personnel with an overview of the program components, goals, objectives, implementation alternatives, instructional/training materials, and adoption options.

Training Session: Focuses on the role of the classroom teachers. Trains teachers on the following topics: characteristics of language and culturally diverse gifted and talented students, nomination procedure, strategies that incorporate critical thinking, modification of curriculum to meet the needs of gifted and talented minority students, specific techniques to foster creativity, modification of learning environment, variety of ideas to induce product performance and alternative assessment.

Paraprofessional Training Session (one-half day): The focus of this training is to provide information about the role of the paraprofessional in the GOTCHA classroom.

Administrators Training Session (one-half day): The focus of this session is to heighten the awareness of specific needs of the gifted/talented, ESOL/bilingual students, to discuss implementation of the program, to address issues of future funding, and other administrative concerns.

Parent Training: Parent involvement is a critical part of any educational program. This training provides parents with the following: description of the program objectives, goals, identification process, instruction approach, rights and responsibilities, suggestions and recommendations for improving their child's education, and activities to motivate creativity at home.

Instructional Approach and Instructional Materials

The units in the GOTCHA curriculum follow a thematic approach. The activities reflect the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Student's Process, Product and Environment are modeled after June Maker's Modification Model. The design of the activities incorporate Gardner's Multiple Intelligence's Theory; Social Studies and Science Units provide opportunity for developing Problem Solving Skills. The learning

environment emphasizes the Cooperative Learning Style. Creativity is fostered through the use of Torrance's Creative Thinking Skills of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration; and Metacognitive Skills are taught to instill in students the desire to become life-long learners.

The teachers implementing Project GOTCHA receive specialized training in "Power Teaching." Power Teaching is the compilation of strategies and techniques that have been validated as exemplary practices to produce effective academic gains.

Program Features

Project GOTCHA assists educational agencies with the design and structuring of gifted and talented programs by providing a model that has met rigorous Academic Excellence standards. Project GOTCHA's unique features:

- Transportability has been implemented successfully in diverse cultural and ethnic settings.
- Cost effectiveness.
- Maximizes student's strengths; minimizes weakness.
- Performance Based, Content/Language Acceleration Curriculum.
- ESL methodology integrated with gifted strategies.
- Specialized parent education.
- Multifaceted-multidimensional identification criteria.
- Staff development to include gifted and ESL specialized training.
- Data collection for claims of effectiveness.
- Easily correlated with GOALS 2000, ESL Standards, State Standards and Benchmarks (i.e., Sunshine Standards in Florida).

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